
girls more beautiful than I am. And then she said to him who knows what he would have done with it if my mother said he might bewitch me, and instead of justifying perhaps even hurt my soul."

"Do not be so afraid of such fearful things," said the priest earnestly. "Are you not always in the hands of God, without whose will not a hair of your head falls; and can a man like this, that, with a mere picture in his hand, be more powerful than our Heavenly Father? Besides, I am sure that, you might have known that the priest wished you well, or would he have asked you to marry in marriage?"

"But the girl was silent."

"And why did you refuse to marry?" continued the priest, after a pause. "He was a good and handsome man, and he had a very good supported your mother much better than I can do with the trifle you earn by spinning and silk-winding."

"We are poor people," replied Laurelle vehemently; "and my mother, has loved me so long ill, we should only have been a burden to him. Besides, I am not fit to be a signora."

"How you talk! I tell you that he was an excellent man; and, besides, he would have come to live in Sorrento. You will not easily find such another; he seemed as if sent from heaven to succor you."

"I do not want a husband; I shall never marry!" she said disdainfully, and as if speaking to herself.

"Have you ever made a vow, or are you going into a convent?"

She shook her head.

"People are right in calling you headstrong. Do you consider that you are alone in the world, and that you make the illness and poverty of your mother only more bitter by your obstinacy? What good reason could you have for refusing the honest man who would support you? Answer me, Laurella."

"I have a reason," said she, in a low and hesitating voice, "but I cannot tell it."

"Not tell it!—not to me?—to your father?"
 "Confessor? You know I always seek your counsel."
 "Good—do you not, Laurella?"
 "She nodded."
 "Then unburden your heart," he said.
 "You are right. I will be the first to confide in you; but you are young, and know little of the world, and may afterwards regret having thrown away your happiness for some childish fancy."
 "She cast a hasty glance towards the young man, who, busy with his oar, sat in the bow of the boat, his woollen cap drawn down over his eyes. He was gazing on the sea, and seemed occupied with his own thoughts.
 "The priest saw her look, and bent down his ear."
 "You did not know my father," she whispered, and her eyes were full of gloom.
 "Your father? why, he died when you were scarcely ten years old, I think! What was your father, whose soul, I trust, is in Paradise, to do with your obstinacy?"
 "You did not know him, padre! You do not

"How so?" inquired the priest with surprise.

"Because he beat and ill-treated her. I remember well the nights when he would come home in a perfect fury. She never spoke a word, and did all he wished; but he would never tell my heart nearly broke. I used to draw the covering over my head, and pretend to be asleep; but in truth I cried all night. And when he saw her lying on the floor, his manner would suddenly change; he would raise her, and clasp her in his arms close to his heart, till she cried out half suffocated. My mother forbade me to say a word about it then; but it had such an effect upon her, that ever since his death, many years ago, she has never regained her health; and if she does, which Heaven forbid!—I know you will have said enough."

The little priest shook his head, and seemed uncertain how far he should acknowledge the

justice of the girl's reasoning. At last he said: "Forgive him, my child, as your mother has forgiven him. Do not let your thoughts be troubled by such scenes, Laurella; better times are in store for you, and all this will be forgotten."

"Never! I shall never forget it!" she said, shuddering. "And it is this which has determined me to remain unmarried, padre. I will not be subject to one who will ill treat me one moment and caress me the next. If any were now to attempt to do either the one or the other, I should know how to defend myself, but I could not do so, because she who I loved him. I will love no one well enough to endure such things from him."

"What a child you are to talk such nonsense!" replied the priest. "Are all non-

"Ah! they appear to do so; but no one knew my father's conduct to my mother; she would rather have died a thousand deaths than have uttered a word of complaint, and all because she loved him. If it be love, which closes one's lips so that one dare not cry out for help, and which makes one defenceless against another's violence,"

be endured from an enemy, then, as I have said before, I will never give up my heart and liberty to any man."

"I tell you, you are an ignorant child, and do not understand what you are talking of. Your heart will not ask you whether you will love or loathe in the time comes, all these notions will then give way. After a pause he again continued: "And did you tell that painter—did you tell him that you feared his harshness?"

"His eyes looked just like my father's," when asking forgiveness of my mother, and trying to make it up with her. I know those eyes; they can be feigned even by a man."

After this she remained silent, and the priest followed her example. He was thinking of much good advice that he could give to the girl; but the presence of the young sailor, who, towards the end of the conversation, had become apparently restless, closed his eyes.

In about the space of two hours they arrived in the little harbor of Capri. Antonione carried the padre through the surf to the shore; but Laurella would not wait till he had waded back to fetch her; she lifted her little skirt, took her wooden shoes in her right hand, the bundle in her left, and splashed steadily through the water.

"If there be any opportunity," said the girl, as she arranged something about her dress.

"You know that I must get back," said Antonio, in what was intended for a very indifferent tone. "I shall wait for you till five o'clock; and if you are not here by that time, it does not matter to me."


"You must go back, Laurella," put in the little priest; "you must not leave your mother alone all night. Have you far to go now?"

"To Anacapri, to a vineyard."

"Ah? then our roads do not lie together."

"I am bound for Capri. The Madonna bless my boy-child: and you too, my son."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

 Man shines abroad—woman at home.
Man has science—woman taste.
Man has judgment—woman sensibility.